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23 June 73



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Cease-Fire Developments

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21

25X1

23 June 1973

25X1

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Cease-Fire Developments

25X1

CONTENTS

23 June 1973

CAMBODIA

The Military Situation

25X1

Military Activity Remains Low Saigon-Viet Cong Talks

CAMBODIAThe Military Situation

Government efforts to clear Route 3 and recapture the town of Prey Totung some 15 miles south of Phnom Penh made little progress on 23 June as the Khmer Communists continued to put up stiff resistance. Government troops also made little headway on 23 June in their attempts to clear Route 6 northeast of the capital. The situation between Route 6 and the Mekong River continues to deteriorate. Government forces on 22 June abandoned the village of Phnom Del, leaving the government with only a few small outposts left all along the river's west bank. Efforts are being made to resecure that area. Meanwhile, the last of the eight battalions scheduled to clear Route 5 northwest of Phnom Penh are now in place and ready to begin clearing operations.

In other developments, the local press in Phnom Penh reports that the High Political Council has finally named Army Chief of Staff Major General Sosthene Fernandez to the newly created post of commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He will also remain as army chief of staff. It is not clear at this point just how much authority Fernandez will be able to exercise, particularly if Lon Nol remains as supreme commander.

25X1

23 June 1973

-1-

25X1

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SOUTH VIETNAMMilitary Activity Remains Low

No significant ground action has been reported during the past twenty-four hours, although both sides persist in trying to improve local positions in a few areas. In the highlands, heavy Communist artillery fire and poor weather are impeding government efforts to retake ground west of Kontum City that earlier was lost to the North Vietnamese. In the delta, Communist gunners in Chuong Thien Province shelled government positions near the provincial capital of Vi Thanh. Military activity, however, has dropped sharply throughout the usually active delta region.

25X1

Saigon-Viet Cong Talks

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The next regular session of the bilateral talks is scheduled for 28 June. The Thieu government's chief negotiator, Deputy Prime Minister Vien, is returning to Paris from Saigon for the session after reviewing South Vietnam's position with senior government officials.

25X1

25X1

23 June 1973

- 3 -

25X1